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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 HA-02 PM-03 DODE-00 INR-05
CIAE-00 NSAE-00 PA-01 NSC-05 L-01 IO-06 /045 W
----------073655 050844Z /20
P R 050743Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8371
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
USUN NEW YORK 788
US MISSION GENEVA 666

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 4525

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AF
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE METHOD TO LIBERATE AFGHAN POLITICAL PRISONERS

1. WHEN BRITISH AMBASSADOR CROOK, ON JUNE 3. TOOK VISITING MP PETER TAPSELL TO SEE AFGHAN PRIME MINISTER TARAKI, THE SUBJECT OF THE DETAINED MEMBERS OF FORMER PRESIDENT DAOUD'S FAMILY CAME UP. TARAKI SAID IF A RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION WERE TO COME TO KABUL AND ASK THAT THE DETAINEES BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE AFGHANISTAN, THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WOULD RELEASE THEM.

2. CROOK THINKS TARAKI'S PROPOSAL IS GENUINE. SUCH AN INTERNATIONAL INTERCESSION WOULD PROVIDE TARAKI WITH A FACE-SAVING WAY TO DISPOSE OF WHAT HE PROBABLY NOW REGARDS AS AN EMBARRASSING PROBLEM. ADDITIONALLY, THIS DISPLAY OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR TARAKI TO DEAL WITH THOSE HARDLINERS IN HIS GOVERNMENT WHO WOULD PREFER TO DEAL HARSHLY WITH THE DETAINEES.

3. THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN PLANNING TO REPORT THIS TO
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LONDON BY LETTER VIA DIP POUCH, BUT IN VIEW OF OUR SENDING OUR RECOMMENDATION TELEGRAPHICALLY, HE IS CONSIDERING THE DISPATCH OF A TELEGRAM AS WELL.

4. RECOMMENDATION: THAT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BRITISH WE APPROACH THE APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AND SUGGEST THAT ITS HEAD UNDERTAKE THIS MISSION OF MERCY TO AFGHANISTAN.

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I DO NOT FEEL QUALIFIED TO JUDGE WHICH ORGANIZATION WOULD
BE THE APPROPRIATE ONE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE UN HIGH COMMISSION
FOR REFUGEES OR THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, BUT I THINK
IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE HEAD OF ANY SUCH ORGANIZATION UNDERTAKE
THIS MISSION. THE VISIT SHOULD ALSO TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE IN VIEW OF THE BAD PRISON CONDITIONS AND POOR HEALTH
BEING SUFFERED BY MANY OF THE DETAINEES.
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